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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 TEGUCIGALPA 001933

SIPDIS

CJCS FOR GENERAL MYERS  
STATE FOR PM, INL, WHA, WHA/CEN, AND WHA/PPC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/15/2013

TAGS: [OVIP](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [MOPS](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SNAR](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: CJCS GENERAL MYERS MEETS WITH HONDURAN MINISTER OF  
DEFENSE AND CJCS TO THANK GOH; DISCUSSES REGIONAL ISSUES

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1868

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i., Roger D. Pierce;  
Reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

1. (C) SUMMARY: On August 13, after a meeting with Honduran President Ricardo Maduro, CJCS General Myers met separately with Minister of Defense Federico Breve, Honduran CJCS General Barahona, and other senior military officials to discuss issues of bilateral importance and to thank Honduras for its strong support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) including its troop contribution to that effort, and the signing and ratification of an ICC Article 98 Agreement. Among the particular issues discussed were Iraq, narcotrafficking, regional disarmament, and the modernization of the Honduran Armed Forces. The Honduran military is proud of its planned role in Iraq, supportive of greater USG-GOH cooperation in counternarcotics, and firmly opposed to any linkage of Nicaraguan MANPADS and Honduran F-5's. END SUMMARY

2. (U) CJCS General Myers, accompanied by Mr. Hanley, CPT Hunt, COL Ross, LCDR Cheever, and COL Gonzalez, and from the Embassy Charge, DATT, MILGP Commander, and PolMilOff (notetaker), met August 13 with Honduran Minister of Defense Federico Breve, Vice Minister of Defense Perez, CJCS General Barahona, Vice CJCS GEN Andino, Inspector General GEN Maldonado, Army Commanding General COL Vasquez, Air Force Commanding General COL Caceres, and Navy Commanding General COL Mejia. The meeting took place at the Casa Presidencial.

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Breve Highlights Risks in Iraq and Changing Role of Military  
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3. (C) MOD Breve began the session by outlining the areas that the Government of Honduras (GOH) has worked closely with the USG over the last couple of months, including providing troops to OIF and signing and ratifying an ICC Article 98 Agreements with the United States. He again reiterated that this came at a political cost to the Maduro Administration as well as put Honduras at heightened risk of terrorist attack, but that Honduras was prepared to accept these risks in support of U.S. policy objectives. MOD Breve also stated that the GOH has considered the ramifications of taking casualties in Iraq in support of the war against terror and that they were prepared for that eventuality.

4. (C) MOD Breve then outlined for General Myers the dramatic changes the Honduran Armed Forces (HOAF) had been through over the last few years. He began with the budget process and spending which was now a transparent process compared to the past when it was undisclosed. He mentioned that this process has helped the HOAF spend its limited resources more wisely. He also mentioned that having the HOAF under civilian leadership has been a positive development both for the HOAF and democracy in Honduras.

5.(C) MOD Breve discussed the changing missions and role of the HOAF in Honduras. He stated that respect for human rights and democracy was now firmly entrenched in the HOAF and that the institution as a whole was rapidly becoming more professional. MOD Breve went on to note that this process was very important for the HOAF and its reconciliation with the Honduran people. To cement these institutional changes, Breve mentioned that the HOAF would like to establish a defense university similar to the National Defense University in the United States. Breve then outlined the new missions the HOAF was involved in including: disaster relief, the fight against narcotrafficking; fighting crime; helping to protect the environment; educational programs; health care; and helping to eradicate diseases such as dengue.

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Honduran Military Committed to Counternarcotics Fight  
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6. (C) MOD Breve stated the HOAF was committed to the fight against narcotrafficking and recent success demonstrated this. However, Breve indicated that increased information sharing and more resources were necessary for success. He noted that Honduras was still looking for more substantial support from the USG in this area.

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General Myers Expresses Gratitude for Honduran Support  
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17. (C) General Myers thanked Breve and the HOAF for its support of OIF and noted that Honduras was among the some 40 other nations that have come together to provide the Iraqi people the chance for a better life. General Myers acknowledged that the Honduran deployment of troops in support of OIF was a "big deal" and that it was noticed at the highest levels of the USG, raising Honduras' profile. General Myers reiterated his confidence that the Honduran troops would do well in Iraq due to their good training and competent leadership. General Myers stated that all democracies face the threat of terrorism and have a stake in the current security environment and that the GOH was a solid partner in this effort. General Myers also thanked MOD Breve for his continued support of Joint Task Force Bravo. Note: Five hundred fifty-eight U.S. service men and women and eight civilian DOD employees are stationed at Honduras' Soto Cano Air Base under the auspices of SOUTHCOM as Joint Task Force Bravo. End Note.

18. (C) General Myers congratulated MOD Breve on Honduras' effort to create a national defense university, suggesting that this type of education helps to bring together "the big picture." General Myers offered USG assistance and directed Breve to the Country Team if he wanted to pursue this offer.

19. (C) Charge also congratulated Breve and the HOAF on its recent successes in the fight against narcotrafficking, stating that the Embassy was pleased with their efforts. Charge also indicated that the Embassy was looking for ways to better assist the HOAF in their efforts.

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Regional Disarmament and Integration  
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10. (C) Breve stated that the countries of Central America needed to act with a more regional focus rather than unilaterally when approaching the many problems the region faces, such as narcotrafficking. Breve noted that this process was complicated and slow, but that it needed to be done. Breve also called for greater information sharing on the part of the USG.

11. (C) Breve expressed his displeasure with the recent meeting in Nicaragua to discuss regional disarmament, feeling that the USG was putting pressure on Honduras to give up its fleet of F-5's as a tradeoff for Nicaragua eliminating its stockpile of Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS). Breve indicated that he did not have an agenda for the meeting or know PM Assistant Secretary of State Bloomfield or WHA Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Fisk planned on attending the meeting, suggesting he felt somewhat ambushed on the issue. Note: In fact, Charge had told both Breve and Acting Foreign Minister Anibal Quinonez, who also attended the meeting, that both A/S Bloomfield and DAS Fisk would be present. End Note.

12. (C) Breve said he understood USG concerns about MANPADS but that that was between the U.S. and the Government of Nicaragua. He indicated that Honduras was ready to discuss F-5's, but only in the context of regional disarmament, not as a precondition for reducing Nicaragua's stockpile of MANPADS. General Myers let MOD Breve know that while in Nicaragua, the F-5 issue was never raised. He said the MANPADS threat was an issue of bilateral importance between the USG and Nicaragua.

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Cooperation and Assistance Welcomed; F-5's for MANPADS Not  
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13. (C) Comment: General Myers' meeting with MOD Breve, General Barahona, and the top Honduran military brass was a well-received outcome of the GOH's strong support for the USG in Iraq and on Article 98. The visit, coming as the last of the Honduran troops were departing for Iraq via training in Spain, was also a concrete example to the Honduran public of the gratitude the U.S. has for Honduran assistance in Operation Iraqi Freedom. The HOAF is sober about the situation in Iraq and possible casualties for Honduran troops, but is proud of its planned role. Breve's call for more USG assistance for the military for counternarcotics is not new, but will continue. Regional disarmament is a somewhat pricklier issue for Breve and the GOH, who are strongly opposed to any link between Nicaraguan MANPADS and Honduran F-5's, which they see as a non-starter. End Comment.  
Pierce